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Magalie Roman Salas
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W., Room TWD 204
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Development of Operational, Technical and Spectrum Requirements for Meeting Federal, State and Local Public Safety Agency Communication Requirements Through The Year 2010, WT Docket No. 96-86; Report of Ex Parte Communications

Dear Secretary Salas:

On Monday, April 19, an ex parte presentation was made to D'wana Terry, Chief, Private Wireless Division, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, and Herbert Zeiler, Deputy Chief, by Randall Young and the undersigned, both of Keller and Heckman; and a further ex parte presentation was made on Wednesday, April 21, by Peter LaPlaca, President of Safety Tech Industries (STI) and the undersigned to Herbert Zeiler, Eugene Thompson and Michael Wilhelm, all of the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau. Both presentations concerned the request of Safety Tech Industries for reconsideration of the Commission's First Report and Order in WT Docket No. 96-86 in order to make provision for low power on-scene/personnel accountability reporting systems (on-scene/PAR systems).

The presentation on Monday, April 19, addressed matters in the record of the proceeding, specifically including (i) that no party had opposed the STI petition for reconsideration, and (ii) that no other party had requested a frequency set aside from the 700 MHz band public safety

allocation for a specific communications use. These considerations are reflected in the Reply of STI to Responses to Petitions for Reconsideration, submitted February 23, 1999 in the WT Docket No. 96-86 proceeding.

The presentation on Wednesday, April 21, consisted of a demonstration of prototype units of the STI on-scene/PAR system. The demonstration employed three self-contained breathing apparatus masks outfitted with the STI MaskCom® system and a vehicle equipped with the mobile command center equipment. The mobile command center both provides communications with personnel wearing the MaskCon equipped SCBA units and contains the computer systems which provide the personnel reporting, tracking and alarming functions. The demonstration reflected the system characteristics set forth in the STI Petition for Reconsideration.

Two substantive issues arose in the context of these meetings. First, STI confirmed that the frequency allocation requested from the 700 MHz band General Use pool, consisting of a compliment of five 12.5 kHz bandwidth paired contiguous channels plus one separate 12.5 kHz paired channel (or 10 plus 2, 6.25 kHz channel pairs), was designed for, and is adequate to provide, protection against roll-off interference from adjacent channel, full power mobile operations. The voice channels are most susceptible to harmful interference. Consequently, the voice channels will be placed within the center of the five channel bandwidth. Data channels, which are less susceptible to harmful interference, will be placed on either end. The requested channel allotment further provides separation for the homing signal, which will utilize the separated 12.5 kHz channel. This separation also is designed to protect against interference to the communications channels. Accordingly, no guard band is being requested to otherwise protect the on-scene/PAR systems from adjacent channel roll-off.

In the context of the foregoing discussion, inquiry was made concerning the potential for interference during early system deployment from UHF television operations. STI noted that its Petition for Reconsideration had identified optimum channels within the band plan adopted by the Commission for operation of the on-scene/PAR systems, and the specified channels were selected in order to minimize the potential for harmful interference from UHF television operations. The requested channel assignments lie outside of the UHF television video signal. Specifically, the channels requested are General Use channels 923-932 and 1883-1892 for the voice and data operations, and General Use channels 1-2 and 961-962 for the homing signal frequency, to comprise the six paired channels requested. *See, Petition for Reconsideration at Section III. B.1.*

Secondly, an issue was raised concerning whether the reservation of channels for on-scene/PAR system operation should be preserved indefinitely, or whether if the frequencies are not employed for the designated use within a specified time, the Regional Planning Committees should be empowered to override the on-scene/PAR designation and assign the channels for general use. STI acknowledged that the RPCs should have the flexibility to assign the channels

for general use if not licensed for on-scene/PAR system operation within a reasonable period of time. A time frame for authorizing the RPCs to override the on-scene/PAR channel designation of five to ten years was discussed. Factors suggested by STI in determining the relevant time period include the small portion requested of total spectrum available[1/], the need to clear UHF television operations from the band in a number of major metropolitan areas -- which will not occur until 2006, and the time until the band is available for full public safety use -- which first will require development of a common air interface for digital interoperability and then the ramp-up of equipment manufacturing production lines for the primary mobile communications operation within the band.

An original and one copy of this report is herewith submitted. Should there be any questions concerning the foregoing, please feel free to communicate with the undersigned.

Very truly yours,

Martin W. Bercovici

cc: D'wana Terry
Herbert Zeiler
Eugene Thompson
Michael Wilhelm
Peter LaPlaca

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1/ The requested channels constitute less than 2% of the 1,248 General Use 6.25 kHz 700 MHz band channels provided by the Commission in the First Report and Order.